

APPLICATION TO PLACE ON THE OFFICIAL INDEX OF REJECTED NAMES IN ZOOLOGY, THE GENERIC NAME *RATTON* AND THE SPECIFIC NAMES *R. AGRESTE*, *R. BLANCODEBAXO*, *R. COLIBREVE*, *R. ESPINOSO*, AND *R. TUCOTUCO*, DATED FROM BRANTS 1827.
Z.N.(S.) 1775

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In the spanish edition of his work on the Mammals of Paraguay, Felix de Azara (1802) gives a more complete account of the cricetids than that published 1801 in the french edition. Three new mice are there described: ratton agreste, ratton blanco-debaxo and ratton colibreve. Azara did not apply linnean nomenclature to the mice he described but vernacular names.

2. The first naturalist to apply linnean nomenclature to these three animals was Brants (1827). Brants used Desmarest's names for the mice described in the french edition but realized that the other three of the spanish edition remained without names. He simply took Azara's vernacular names and employed them as linnean. The name *Ratton* was used by him for a very heterogeneous division including:

<i>Ratton agreste</i>	ratton agreste of Azara
<i>Ratton blanco debaxo</i>	ratton blanco debaxo of Azara
<i>Ratton colibreve</i>	ratton colibreve of Azara
<i>Ratton espinoso</i>	ratton espinoso of Azara
<i>Ratton tucotuco</i>	tucotuco of Azara

The last two animals do not belong to the cricetids. *R. espinoso* is a junior objective synonym of *Euryzgomatomys spinosus* (G. Fischer).

3. Brants placed the name *Ratton* in the same category as other generic names like *Mus* and *Spalax*. There is no doubt that Brants used *Ratton* as a generic name. This has been also realized by Neave who listed the genus *Ratton* in the "Nomenclator zoologicus".

4. The next naturalist to give linnean names for the mice of the spanish edition was J. B. Fischer (1829). He named only two of the three new mice of 1802. The names are:

<i>M[us] azarae</i>	ratton agreste of Azara
<i>M[us] dubius</i>	ratton blanco debaxo of Azara.

No other new names seem to have been applied to the cricetids concerned.

5. J. B. Fischer's names for the two above mentioned mice have been generally accepted. They are the only names mentioned in the revision of the taxonomy of Azara's mice by Tate (1932), in the "Index Animalium" of Sherborn and in the Catalogue of Cabrera (1961). The ratton colibreve remained unnamed. Probably because of their identity with the vernacular names of Azara, the five Brants names were never considered as senior synonyms by subsequent authors. According to Art. 23(b) of the Code they are to be considered forgotten names. After more than 130 years' oblivion, however,

the name *agreste* in the combination *Akodon agreste* has been recently employed by Hershkovitz (1966 : 106).

6. Since:

- (a) Brants names have never been employed and their introduction will not contribute to the stability of the neotropical rodent nomenclature but to more confusion;
- (b) The use of the name *Akodon colibreve* (Brants) as the appropriate name for the colibreve will cause the dropping in synonymy of his very probably junior synonym *Akodon obscurus* (Waterhouse) a generally employed and well characterized nominal species for which a type is available;
- (c) This is a typical case covered by Art. 23(b) of the Code and Art. 23(b) (ii) does not seem to have been observed.

7. I proposed that the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature:

- (1) use its plenary powers to suppress the following names for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy:
 - (a) the generic name *Ratton* Brants, 1827, p. 184;
 - (b) the specific name *agreste* Brants, 1827, p. 184, as published in the binomen *Ratton agreste*;
 - (c) the specific name *blancodebaxo* Brants, 1827, p. 185, as published in the binomen *Ratton blancodebaxo*;
 - (d) the specific name *colibreve* Brants, 1827, p. 186, as published in the binomen *Ratton colibreve*;
 - (e) the specific name *espinoso* Brants, 1827, p. 186, as published in the binomen *Ratton espinoso*;
 - (f) the specific name *tucotuco* Brants, 1827, p. 187, as published in the binomen *Ratton tucotuco*;
- (2) to place the names suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above on the appropriate Official Indexes of Rejected and Invalid Names in Zoology.

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